

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Midland Hotel

other names/site number The Hotel Power

2. Location

street & number 414 26th Avenue [n/a] not for publication

city or town Wilson [n/a] vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Ellsworth code 053 zip code 67490

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does
not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [] locally. (See
continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Richard D. Parkratz Deputy SHPO 5-14-02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[] removed from the National Register

[] other, explain:

See continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	total

Name of related multiple property listing.

NA

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register.

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC/hotel

COMMERCE/restaurant

Current Functions

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE VICTORIAN

see continuation sheet [].

Materials

foundation Stone: limestone

walls Stone: limestone

Brick

roof Metal: aluminum

Synthetic: rubber

other

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1899-1952

Significant Dates

1899

1902

Significant Person(s)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Opera House Museum and The Midland Hotel Foundation, Wilson Kansas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
14 545735 4297545

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brenda R. Spencer

organization _____ date 6 March, 2002

street & number 10150 Onaga Road telephone 785-456-9857

city or town Wamego state Kansas zip code 66547

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

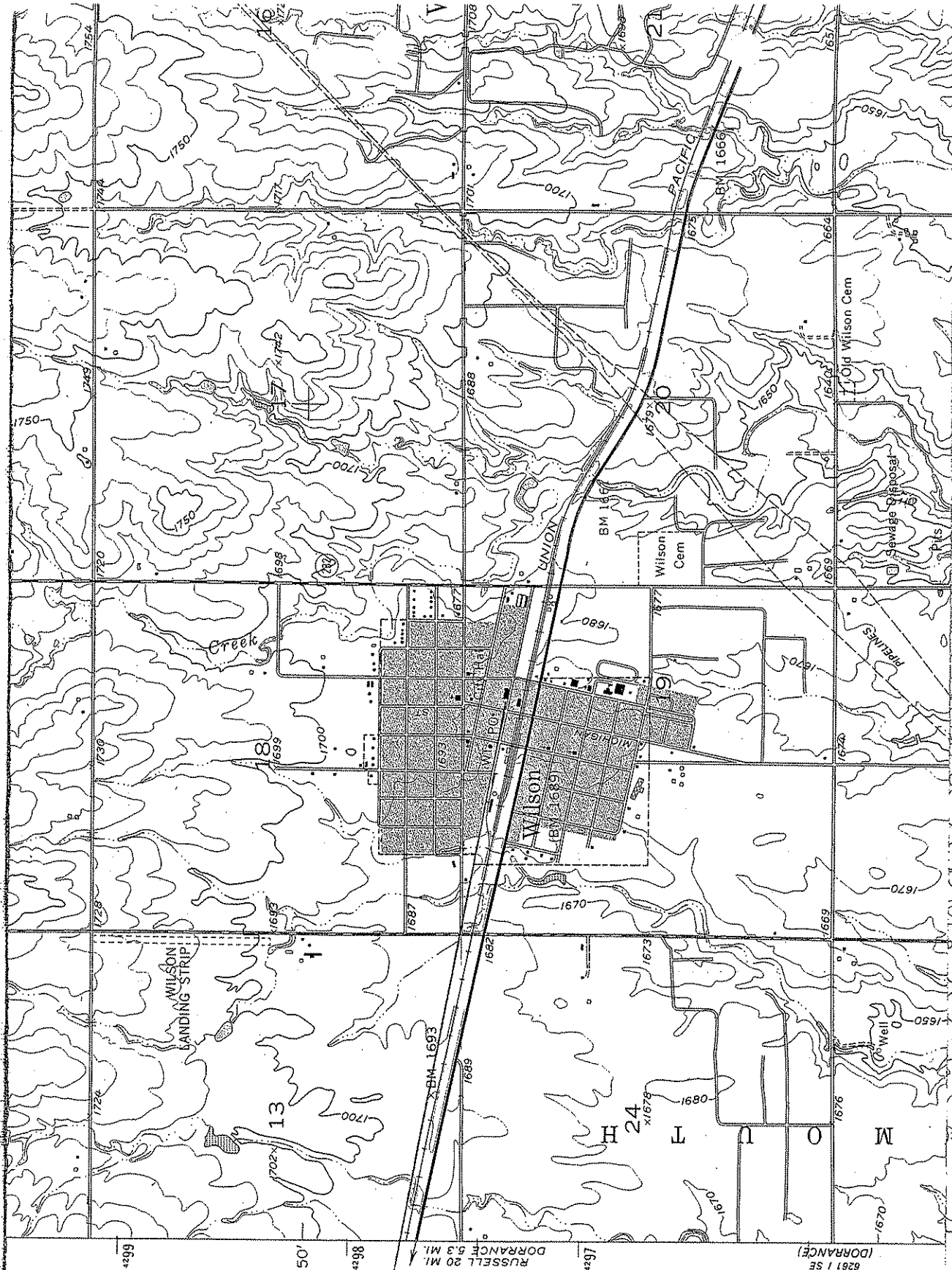
name Midland Hotel LLC, Gary Everett, President

street & number 2303 Avenue I/P.O. Box 442 telephone 785-658-2111

city or town Wilson state Kansas zip code 67490

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



THE MIDLAND HOTEL
 414 26TH AVENUE
 WILSON, KANSAS
 UTM - ZONE 14
 545735 E
 4297545 N

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The Midland Hotel
Ellsworth County, Kansas

7. Narrative Description

The Midland Hotel was built in 1899; it opened August 7th, 1899 as the Hotel Power in downtown Wilson, Kansas.¹ The hotel is a three story native limestone structure with a partial basement. The plan form is a modified rectangle with a 'U' shaped corridor configuration that feeds rooms on the second and third floors originally boasting 27 rooms.

The Hotel Power was gutted by fire in 1902. The interior was destroyed by the fire and was subsequently rebuilt using the existing exterior walls.² A square shaped rear addition at the northeast corner of the original building was constructed in 1915 to expand the capacity of the hotel.³ Prior to closing in 1988, the hotel offered 34 rooms, with a combination of shared and private baths.

The Midland Hotel is a Late Victorian vernacular limestone building with influences from the Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque architectural styles. Distinguishing features include a metal mansard roof with shed dormers, 1/1 double hung wood windows, and twin tripartite windows flanking the central bay which is comprised of an arched main entrance and adjacent storefront on the front facade.

The hotel was in fair to poor condition due primarily to general lack of maintenance. The building has been vacant since 1988. There has been significant moisture penetration over the years. The roof had failed, there are a number of broken windows and serious masonry problems. A new roof was installed approximately three years ago to prevent further damage. The building is currently under rehabilitation.

Exterior

The site is Lots 21-24 of Block 6 in the original Wilson townsite. The building occupies the south half of the site. Located just 200 feet north of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks at 414 E. Saline Street (now 26th Avenue), the front of the hotel faces south, toward the railroad tracks and at the time of construction, the depot (built in 1879 by Kansas Pacific Railway, demolished in 1983). Local histories of the hotel note that a 60 foot windmill was located just north of the hotel which stored water on the third floor, used for bathing and the kitchen.⁴ Historic photos depict a cordoned walkway from the depot to the hotel.

The plan shape is generally rectangular with the main portion of the building 78' in length and 33-1/2' deep. However, the form is almost 'U' shaped with projections on the rear (north) facade at the east and west ends. The west projection is 21' wide and extends from the main building 12'. The east projection is 31' wide and extends only 5' from the original building. The addition (approximately 32' square) extends north and east from the east projection. The basement is the full 78' in length and the full 33-1/2' deep in the center bay however, the east and west ends are 27' deep and do not extend north of the main building like the upper floors.

The exterior is hand-pitched, coursed stone called 'Greenhorn' or post rock limestone, said to have been quarried north of town.⁵ Structurally, the hotel is in good condition. Prior to 1978, a stucco coating was sprayed on the rear (north) facade, reportedly to seal holes and cracks created by sparrows nesting in the wall.⁶ There are several maintenance concerns with the masonry including the parging on the rear facade and significant areas of loose and missing mortar. There is also some former inappropriate repointing that has caused spalling of the limestone. A variety of mortar profiles exist today including some of the original mortar, a 'grapevine' beaded joint.

The rear addition is a frame structure with tan/buff brick veneer and a built-up asphalt roof. The addition was modest and poorly constructed with substandard materials. The entire foundation has failed resulting in large cracks in the exterior walls. The brick veneer, originally constructed of soft brick, not intended for exterior application, is crumbling. Initially tied to the wood sheathing with short nails, the brick's adhesion has failed. In

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summary, the foundation and exterior enclosure of the rear addition is in poor condition and in need of substantial repair.

The most prominent character defining feature of the exterior is the mansard roof, characteristic of the Second Empire style (popular 1855-1885).⁷ The third floor is entirely encompassed within the mansard roof which has a straight angled profile void of curves or flares. Shallow, shed dormers extend from the peak of the mansard over each third floor window. A simple cornice serves as a transition between the stone facade and the roof. A plain box eave extends approximately 2-1/2' around the perimeter. Simple paired brackets project from the cornice to support the eaves. The mansard roof, dormers, eaves, cornice and brackets were all originally metal but had failed allowing significant moisture infiltration. A replacement roof, matching the style and profile of the original, was installed approximately three years ago. Historic photos document a variety of roof signs over the years. Early photos show "Midland Hotel" painted on the south side of the roof. Later photos show two large roof-mounted signs.

The windows are another character-defining feature. The majority of windows on the original hotel and the addition are single, 1/1 double-hung wood windows. All of these windows are of consistent width although the height varies on each floor. First and second floor windows have hand-pitched, flat limestone lintels and sills that project slightly from the facade. On the east, west, and north facades, the windows are generally aligned on the first and second stories. The third floor is inset from the main structure approximately 2-1/2 feet around the perimeter because it is encompassed within the mansard roof. Therefore the third story windows do not align with the windows on the lower floors. The windows on the addition are similar in style and size to those of the original building however, they have concrete sills and concealed steel lintels. There are a few unique windows on the building. On the south facade there is a set of paired 1/1 double hung windows above the main entrance on the second and third floors. There are 1/1 double hung basement windows on the south and east facades of the original building with stone window wells; some of these openings have been blocked in. On the rear (north) facade, a small square fixed window with a multi-light surround is located above the rear entry in the stairwell. Although most windows are in place, the glass has been broken out of many windows and there is significant deterioration and rotting of wood members due to moisture infiltration. Many of the windows are boarded up and appear to be damaged beyond repair.

The first floor of the front (south) facade incorporates a variety of fenestration creating a noticeable contrast from the simple imposing upper facade. Although not symmetrical, the front facade is comprised of three bays. The main entrance is located toward the east end of the central bay. The entrance is recessed behind a massive arched opening. Two courses of stone form the arch and project slightly from the facade creating a modest surround. Three cast iron steps lead to the entrance, a single door flanked by multi-light sidelights. The sidelights are in place but the door is missing. The entry vestibule has a white hexagon tile floor with "The Midland Hotel" in blue. The recessed entrance into the lobby is a pair of paneled doors with single lights. A large simple, rectangular transom is in-place with operating hardware.

Adjacent to the main entrance, on the west side of the central bay is a large storefront. The storefront appears awkward in terms of scale and proximity to the arched main entrance. The storefront itself is divided into three bays by two cast iron columns. The center bay is a pair of intact paneled doors with large lights. The flanking bays have paneled wood bulkheads and large plate glass display windows. A large transom window caps each bay of the storefront. The storefront opens directly into the lobby and facilitated the handling of luggage in and out of the hotel. It is here that the railroad's influence is most evident; there are no stairs below the double doors; the storefront was designed to accommodate the transfer of cargo and luggage directly from the railroad baggage carts.⁸

Historic photos indicate a variety of awnings through the years. The earliest photos show what appears to be a large metal shed awning supported by metal posts extending from the top of the storefront over the entire central

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bay. A photo dated 1915 still shows the large shed awning in addition to a metal slat awning on the pair of 2nd floor windows over the main entrance. A 1934 photo shows a canvas awning over the storefront with a flat fixed awning at the main entrance and retractable canvas awnings on all third floor windows on the south (front) facade. A later photo (presumably 1950-60s) illustrates a fixed arched metal awning at the main entrance.

The central bay of the south facade is flanked by tripartite windows at the first floor on each of the end bays. These windows have segmented arched lintels and stained glass transoms. The segmented arched lintels are uniquely detailed, comprised of two projecting courses of limestone, the lower course is similar in size to the stone on the facade; the top course is very narrow and projects further. The arched lintel is angled from the ends of the masonry opening and abuts a smooth faced stone. It is interesting to note that these segmented arched lintels are almost identical to openings on the Wilson Opera House, built in 1901. It is documented that Frank Kvasnicka, a local contractor and stone mason, was in charge of the Opera House construction. He led a team of fourteen men who built the stone building with native stone from the Hay Canyon Road five miles north of Wilson.⁹ There is no documentation of Kvasnicka's involvement in the construction of the hotel but the similarity of window details suggests the possibility of the same craftsmen involved in both buildings.

The main entrance, storefront, and tripartite windows are all intact and in relatively good condition. There is some wood deterioration and significant peeling paint. Some transom panels and windows are boarded up. Three of the six stained glass panels are in place. At some point, the window on the west end bay has been modified to accommodate a door in the western most light of the tripartite window. This was probably done to provide direct access to the dining room which operated as a restaurant and café, independent of the hotel at times in the building's past.

There are a number of secondary entrances to the hotel. There were basement entrances on the east and west sides of the hotel where vendors and salesmen traveling by rail would haul large trunks into the Sample Room to display their wares for local and area businessmen to view and purchase. Additionally, there are rear entrances into the lobby in the central bay and the kitchen on the west bay. There are metal fire escapes on the east and west ends of the original building, accessed from a window on the third floor. A small porch, a flat roof supported by a single square column, covers an entrance into the south facade of the addition (at the northeast corner of the original building) and there is a rear exit on the north side of the addition. There is also a fire escape of the rear (north) facade of the addition, accessed by windows on the upper floors.

The side and rear elevations of the original structure are simple and unadorned limestone walls with regularly spaced double hung windows and paneled doors at the secondary entrances. The brick walls of the addition are unadorned, also with regularly spaced, double-hung windows and paneled doors at secondary entrances.

Interior

In 1899, the August 10th edition of *The Wilson Echo* announced the opening of the Hotel Power on Monday, August 7th. "It has all the equipments of a modern first-class hotel, is lighted by acetylene and has hot water heating apparatus. It contains 27 elegantly furnished and well lighted and ventilated sleeping apartments with bathrooms, for the accommodation of guests, a large, airy dining room, a handsome parlor, a fine office, a reading and writing room, and a large sample room for traveling salesmen."¹⁰

Damaged extensively by fire in 1902, only the exterior walls were left standing; the interior was completely rebuilt, closely resembling the original structure.¹¹

The lobby and reception area was located in the center of the first floor, accessed directly from the main entrance and storefront. The main stairway is located at the rear of the lobby, on the north wall. The dining room was located on the west end with the kitchen to the rear, on the northwest corner of the first floor. The parlor was

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located on the east end of the first floor. Guest rooms were located on the 2nd and 3rd floors. It appears that there were originally two bathrooms in the center of the 2nd and 3rd floors, near the main stairway. The 1915 addition had two bathrooms but it is uncertain whether additional bathrooms were added to the original structure in conjunction with the addition or at a later time. It is reported that Mr. A.D. Jellison, a local banker who was then 90 years old and had moved to Junction City, raised \$2,000 for the addition of modern bathrooms but the date is not documented.¹² The addition has four rooms per floor with a central north/south corridor. The stairway is located west of the corridor. It is reported that the third floor was used for living quarters for hotel and restaurant staff. Today, all guest rooms have a wall mounted lavatory. Bathroom accommodations include a combination of shared and private baths. The basement was the original location of the Sample Room on the west end, a laundry room, coal storage and the boiler. It is reported that the basement had a large coal-bin, filled once a year with one railroad boxcar full of coal.¹³

Stylistically, the hotel's interior combines elements and features of the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, and Victorian eras. "The lobby was rebuilt in 1902, in the Colonial Revival style (popular 1890-1955). The main staircase is constructed of stock Colonial Revival parts commonly found in early 20th century millwork catalogs."¹⁴ Originally the stairwell was open to the second floor hallway above but has since been enclosed to comply with fire codes. Pocket doors in the lobby feature horizontal rather than vertical panels, a feature also common to Colonial Revival interiors.¹⁵ The lobby features both oak and pine, stained and varnished.

"Throughout the hotel's interior, doors and windows reflect an earlier style. Vertically paneled doors predate the Colonial Revival influence; they fell from popularity in new construction in the 1890's. Incised head blocks and symmetrically profiled casings create architraves commonly found in Queen Ann inspired structures."¹⁶ Third floor windows are deeply recessed due to the pitch of the mansard roof. These windows have plaster surrounds with turned corner boards in place of the casings found on the first and second floor windows. Still hanging in the recessed windows are the fire escape chains, installed after the devastating 1902 fire. These two to three feet long chains bolt firmly into the wall at one end, leaving the other end with a large metal loop attached. In the event of a fire, a sheet could be tied through the free hanging looped end, instead of around a bedpost or furniture, so a guest could lower himself to safety out the window.¹⁷

"On the second and third floors of the original building, baseboards have a simple ogee profile. The doors on these floors had cast iron rimlocks with porcelain knobs; they, too, were virtually obsolete by the turn of the century. Hinges and other cast iron hardware are patterned in late Victorian fashion. In the addition, door and window casings are wide and flush. Baseboards have simple caps and doors are horizontally paneled."¹⁸

All wood trim (window and door casings, baseboards, etc.) is painted. The doors, a variety of solid paneled and louvered styles are in place and retain a natural wood finish. "It was common for 19th century hotels to utilize secondary louvered or screened ventilating doors in the corridors. Such doors offered guests some degree of comfort during in the warmer months. With the advent of air-conditioning, these doors virtually disappeared from hotel construction. Louvered doors are in place and represent an integral part of the Midland's interior character."¹⁹

The first floor of the original building has oak tongue and groove flooring. Flooring is tongue and groove pine throughout the second and third floors and the addition. Since the beginning, guestrooms have used linoleum or carpeting to cover the center of the floor while the room's wood floor was left visible on the perimeter. Modern carpeting was installed in the corridors and some rooms as early as the 1960's.²⁰ Today carpeting is in place on most floors. The floors in the bathrooms are raised with a variety of linoleum and vinyl coverings. The kitchen also has vinyl floor covering.

The walls and ceilings are plastered throughout. Most guest rooms show evidence of originally having been papered and bordered. Some walls now have wood paneling (installed in 1960s at first signs of plaster

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deterioration)²¹. The parlor, dining room and kitchen on the first floor have suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Some guest rooms and corridors have surface applied acoustic tile ceilings, presumably to conceal plaster deterioration.

Among the extant interior character-defining features are the following:

- Oak and pine floors are in relatively good condition; some areas have been damaged by water penetration.
- Walls and ceilings are typically plaster; adhered directly to the masonry substrate on perimeter walls and wood lath on interior partition, corridor walls, and ceilings. Some of the plaster is badly deteriorated and damaged due primarily to moisture penetration.
- Wood baseboards and door and window casings are intact with some deterioration and significant peeling paint.
- The main staircase and columns in the lobby are intact and in good condition.
- The reception desk, presumed to date to the 1902 reconstruction, is in place.
- The main entrance, storefront, and tripartite windows are intact with some deterioration, peeling paint and missing features.
- The hexagon tile at the entry vestibule is intact with minor damage.
- Most windows are in place but with significant broken and missing glass and deteriorated wood members.
- The fire escape chains are in place at some third floor windows.
- Interior and exterior doors, a variety of paneled and louvered styles, are intact in relatively good condition.
- A steam boiler and individual cast iron radiators are in place.
- Cast iron lavatories are in place in most guest rooms; many with deteriorated porcelain and some rust.
- A variety of light fixtures are in place, mostly modern but some appear to date to the building's conversion to electric lighting.

Alterations

As described above, the interior was gutted by fire in 1902 and rebuilt. The rear addition was constructed in 1915 and bathrooms were added at an unknown date. The building was regularly "modernized." It boasted hot and cold running water, upgraded to steam heat with individual cast iron radiators, and the lighting was upgraded from acetylene to electricity. Although the precise date of these improvements are not documented, a municipal water and light system was put into operation in 1911, the year Wilson's population reached 1000. Prior to that time, electricity had been furnished, beginning in 1901 by the Weber family which owned a power plant.²² A 1915 article in the *Wilson World* regarding the addition stated that the addition would be plumbed for steam heat, hoping that the Weber plant will run steam heating pipe up Main Street and over to the hotel.²³ The steam system apparently never materialized.

There have been no significant exterior alterations since the addition. Photos document a variety of exterior signs and awnings over the building's past. The interior currently has a variety of "modern" finishes including acoustic tile ceilings, wood paneling on some walls, and combination of vinyl tile, linoleum, and carpeting on most floors. Individual window air-conditioners were installed at some point in the building's past.

In the late 1970s after being cited for fire safety violations by the state fire inspector, smoke detectors and fire alarms were installed and the balcony of the main stairway was enclosed on the second floor to achieve a fire separation between floors.

Summary

The Midland Hotel is in fair condition, in need primarily of general maintenance and repair. The exterior of the building closely resembles its original appearance and retains all character-defining features. Although the building's interior has undergone a number of alterations in attempt to maintain economic viability and meet life safety codes, a significant number of character-defining features are intact maintaining the integrity of the historic character of the building's interior.

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¹ *Wilson Echo*, August 10, 1899.

² *Wilson Echo*, November 13, 1902.

³ *Wilson World*, August 19, 1915.

⁴ Jane Gallart, *History of the Midland Hotel of Wilson, Kansas* (excerpt from unpublished Thesis dissertation entitled *Wilson Kansas Heritage Presentation 1860s-1990s*), p.6.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.1-2.

⁶ *Kansas City Star*, September 26, 1978.

⁷ Eric Swegle, *Architectural Interpretation of the Midland Hotel* (1978) p. 1.

⁸ *Wilson World*, November 25, 1978.

⁹ Swegle, p.2.

¹⁰ *Wilson Echo*, August 10, 1899.

¹¹ *Wilson Echo*, November 13, 1902.

¹² *Wichita Eagle*, September 5, 1969.

¹³ Gallart, p.6.

¹⁴ Swegle, p 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ *Clipping file*, Opera House Museum (Wilson), no source or date on article.

¹⁸ Swegle, p.2.

¹⁹ Swegle, p

²⁰ *Wichita Eagle*, September 5, 1969.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² Frank Sibrava, *History of Wilson*, p.6-9.

²³ *Wilson World*, August 19, 1915.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Midland Hotel is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion 'C' - Architecture, and Criterion 'A' - association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history. A limestone vernacular building that embodies regional construction materials and techniques, the hotel is a Late Victorian structure with stylistic influences from the Italianate, Second Empire, Romanesque, and Queen Ann periods. The Midland Hotel is also significant in the area of 'Commerce'. Located directly across from the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and depot, the hotel catered to railroad workers and travelers. One of the unique features of the hotel was the Sample Room. Vendors and salesmen traveling the railroad to sell their wares would haul trunks of merchandise and samples to the hotel's basement for display in the Sample Room. Area and local merchants came to preview and order merchandise to sell in their establishments. Local advertisements around 1915 document that the hotel was also used by regional doctors as a location for monthly visits to see patients.

The community's recognition of the importance of the hotel was evident when the hotel opened in 1899 and their commitment to its continued operation and success has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout the hotel's one hundred plus year history. The August 10th, 1899 edition of *The Wilson Echo* boasted of the town's pride in opening a new hotel. "Wilson now had a hotel which is a credit to the town and one in which every citizen takes a just pride. The Hotel Power which was thrown open to guests Monday morning is one of the finest hosteleries in the state...The hotel is under the management of W.D. Witwer, whose long experience in the business at Phillipsburg and elsewhere has taught him how to run a hotel in first-class style, and is a guaranty that the Hotel Power will be so managed that it will become a great favorite with the traveling public."¹

A 1969 article in the *Wichita Eagle* perhaps describes the importance of the Midland Hotel to Wilson, Kansas: "Almost all of Wilson had a hand in the building, rebuilding, or nurturing of a hotel which would be a credit to the town. Through much of its seventy year history, the Midland Hotel, as it is known today, has existed and thrived because of the determination of the townspeople. Wilson businessmen recognized the town's chances for survival would be diminished greatly without a hotel. Their efforts to retain a good hotel is a classic example of the importance of hotels during the days when travel was either by train or horse and buggy. Once an important stop on the Union Pacific Railroad, having a good hotel in Wilson for the railroaders and travelers of the line was an essential ingredient for maintaining a favorable rapport with the railroads, which frequently were wooed by other cities."²

Architectural Significance

The Midland Hotel is a three-story, Late Victorian vernacular limestone structure, rectangular in form. The most distinguishing feature is the mansard roof, characteristic of the Second Empire style (popular 1855-1885). The side and rear facades are relatively simple and unadorned. The front facade is comprised of elements characteristic of a variety of architectural styles, all of which fall under the stylistic category of Late Victorian. These features include the massive arched main entry typical of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, the large storefront typical of storefronts found on Italianate commercial buildings in the late 19th century, and the arched tripartite windows with stained glass commonly associated with the Queen Anne style (1880-1910). Stylistically, these features combined with the mansard roof, categorize the hotel as a Late Victorian structure.

However, just as significant as the architectural style of the hotel, is its vernacular classification. The term 'vernacular' refers to regional building types or styles. The hotel embodies this classification in both design and materials.

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In 'An Architectural Interpretation of the Midland Hotel', Eric Swegle analyzes the Midland's design qualities: From a distance, the front (south) facade implies symmetry and formal balance without actually achieving it. The designer's naivete is evidenced by the weak main entrance; despite the use of an arched main entry, it is overshadowed in scale by the adjacent windows. The paired windows above the entrance may have been intended to emphasize the entry but it is barely noticeable. In fact, these pairings only serve to disrupt what might have been true symmetry on the upper floors. These design failings, however, are part of the hotel's significance as they clearly illustrate the rawness of the time and place in which the hotel was built. Such absence of sophistication is too frequently dismissed when in reality, it is common among vernacular buildings, particularly in western Kansas communities. Swegle summarizes the stylistic influences on the hotel's design: "Built at a time of great transition in American architecture, the building's eclectic appearance represents simultaneously the era's appetite for combining styles and the builder's unfamiliarity with the current styles."³

According to Jim Kemp in his book American Vernacular Regional Influences in Architecture and Design, "These early architectural examples are what architects call 'vernacular' because they do not fit the progression of mainstream styles. As architectural styles changed and evolved, regional architecture was left - at least stylistically - further and further behind."⁴ Kemp's theory further explains the hotel's lack of design sophistication.

Kemp notes that regional architecture has always been characterized by the use of local building materials.⁵ Stone is a common building material in vernacular structures, particularly in the mid-west where trees were not abundant. This was clearly the case in Kansas where native limestone was the predominant building material by the late 19th century.

Ellsworth County is the eastern boundary of the Land of the Post Rock. The native limestone, abundant in central Kansas is commonly referred to as 'fence post', 'post rock' or 'Greenhorn' limestone. The stone was first quarried for use as fence posts. By the 1870s and 1880s most communities in the area had residents who were stone workers from the "old country" or "back east" providing the local expertise on the potential of post rock as a building material. To obtain building block, fence posts, or other products, the quarrying process was the same: Holes were drilled about four to five inches deep into the rock and nine to twelve inches apart along a line marked for splitting; feathers and wedges were placed in the holes; and tapping the wedges lightly with a stone hammer split out the slabs, posts, or blocks. In emerging towns, native rock was being used exclusively as a building material and as a key resource in the area's economy, the use of post rock was beginning to symbolize progress.⁶

The town of Wilson was blessed with this natural resource. Limestone, was available for the taking on the divide between the Smoky Hill and Hell Creek and on the bluffs south of the Smokey Hill River. From this natural resource came tons of stone for the building of numerous store buildings in Wilson and private home and barns in and around town."⁷ Included in these stone structures was the Midland Hotel, constructed in 1899 of native limestone, reportedly quarried outside of town. Local histories on the hotel note that "Mrs. Ed Janne stated that her family farm, (the Phillips' farm 10 miles south of Wilson), provided some of the stone for the hotel. It is also noted that Mr. Frank Lilak, south of Wilson, provided some of the stone. Jack Stolenburg, a mason from Holyrood (a small community south of Wilson) is believed to have worked and set the stone."⁸ Although the precise source is unknown, there is no question that the stone was quarried locally. Constructed of native stone, the hotel exemplifies post rock construction common to the region during this period and as such, is significant as an example of a vernacular structure.

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The Midland Hotel
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The Midland Hotel

In 1899 when the Hotel Power (now, the Midland Hotel) was constructed, Wilson had two or three other hotels and the Union Pacific Depot stood as a testament to the role of the railroad in the community. [See the Appendix for an overview of the early history of Wilson.] None of the existing hotels catered directly to the railroad. W.B. (Willis/Wilke) Power, an investor from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania moved to Kansas and used a portion of his son Harry's \$50,000 inheritance to build the Hotel Power, directly across from the depot. The announcement of the hotel's opening boasted, "It has all the equipments of a modern first-class hotel..."⁹ The hotel became a well-known stop on the Union Pacific line, recognized for its hospitality and good food from Kansas City to Denver. It was a frequent stop for vendors and businessmen that traveled the railroad to sell their wares. Merchants came from Claflin, Holyrood, Lucas, Sylvan Grove, Dorrance and surrounding areas to buy merchandise displayed by salesmen in the hotel's sample room. In March of 1900, shortly after its opening, the hotel was in the Commercial and Hotel Register published in Topeka with W.D. Witwer of the Hotel Power listed as a member of the Kansas Hotel Keepers Association.¹⁰

Tragedy struck the hotel on November 7, 1902. The November 13th edition of *The Wilson Echo* reported the details under the headline "Wilson's first class hotel destroyed by fire." "About 4 o'clock Friday morning Miss Wilda Bayless, waitress at Hotel Power, was awakened by smoke in her room. She called the clerk, R.B. Bryant, who ran out into the street and gave the alarm of a fire. It at once was discovered that the northwest part of the hotel was on fire and that great headway had been made by the flames...Everything in the hotel was burned, except some of the furniture on the first floor, which at the request of Miss Bayless, was removed." Guests lost all their belongings. Two gentlemen, Ralph Brown and R.T. Levitt formed ropes from sheets and blankets, tied them to their beds and climbed out of the windows to safety. Within a half hour after the fire was discovered, everyone knew the hotel was a loss and efforts were concentrated on adjoining buildings which were saved. No one knows how the fire originated. It is supposed that it started in the kitchen and had been burning all night. Mr. Power had no insurance on the building; he sustained a loss of \$8,000 and it was understood that he would not rebuild.¹¹

That same issue of *The Wilson Echo* carried a story headlined, "The hotel will be rebuilt." "On Saturday evening a meeting of citizens was called by Mayor Pelishek to consider the matter of rebuilding...A committee composed of Messrs. Lang, A.D. Jellison and Tampier, was elected to confer with Power in regard to securing the site and if possible, find someone to undertake rebuilding the hotel." By Monday morning, Samuel Anspaugh, a rancher from north of Wilson, had met with the committee and agreed to reconstruct the hotel if the citizens would contribute enough money (\$2,250) to purchase the site. At the time of publication, nearly all of the money had been raised.¹²

The hotel was rebuilt, renamed the Midland Hotel and entered a period of prosperity. The hotel was listed in a 1909 brochure of the Union Pacific Railroad entitled, "Hotels and Resorts on Union Pacific." The brochure listed a capacity of 20 rooms, at a rate of \$2.00 per night under the management of Mrs. Monroe. In 1915 the rear addition was added and it was said that Mr. Anspaugh had the classiest hotel in Kansas. It was running one hundred and twenty percent occupancy with only the floor available for late arrivals.¹³ Mr. Anspaugh (and his estate) are listed as owners of the hotel from 1903 to 1928. In Land of the Post Rock, it states that Mr. Anspaugh and his wife lived in the hotel but they leased it to an operator.¹⁴ A letter from Lavergn Vleck states that her aunt and uncle, Frank and Josephine (Kluber) Small operated the hotel for 3-4 years in the early 1920's. Mrs. Vleck remembers visiting the hotel as a child to see her aunt and uncle. In her letter, she recalls:

Aunt Josephine did the cooking and baking while Josephine's daughter Helen and her sister Iva Vleck helped with the cleaning, washing, and in the dining room. After the evening meal, Helen played the piano in the parlor and she and Aunt Iva sang to entertain the drummers (salesmen). Clyde Tobin was a drayman - he carried trunks from the depot to the hotel. She recalls that local merchants, Mrs. Gregor and

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Mr. Schermerhorn came to the hotel to order dresses and coats to sale in their stores...I remember a man coming from Oklahoma, about 1922. This man brought cattle to the stockyards east of the hotel and somebody from "the Flats" would come in and load them up. This man was quite funny and it seems like everybody laughed at him. He was always talking to Aunt Josie about quitting her job and going to work at the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma which she eventually did about 1923 or 24... When she came back to Wilson, I learned that the man responsible for the job at the 101 Ranch was none other than Will Rogers who had a ranch close by.¹⁵

The only advertisement found for the hotel was in the local paper, *The Wilson World*, in September of 1916. The ad lists Frank Small as proprietor. A 1918 article in the *Wilson World* reported that Frank Small closed a deal with Samuel Anspaugh to sell back this interest in the Midland Hotel. It appears that the Small's operated the hotel for Mr. Anspaugh for a period of 3-4 years, possibly with a purchase option or contract. The dates stated in the letter may be off; according to the local newspaper articles, the Small's management of the hotel was around 1915-1918.

In 1917, the hotel had one of two long distance phone booths in Wilson as promoted in an advertisement for the Wilson Telephone exchange. Around this same period, a number of doctors advertised regular monthly visits to the hotel to see patients. Advertisements were found in the local paper for Dr. M. Jay Brown, an eye and ear surgeon from Salina in 1915 and Dr's E.E. Sparr and T.C. Brown, both of Kansas City, Missouri in 1917 and 1919 respectively.

Mr. Anspaugh died on April 8, 1919.¹⁶ According to the Register of Deeds records, his estate sold the hotel to the Midland Hotel Company in 1928, who retained ownership until 1943. Although no documentation could be found on the Midland Hotel Company, it is reported that 6-8 Wilson businessmen bought the hotel and leased it to operators to assure its existence for many years.¹⁷

In the midst of The Great Depression, the hotel continued to prosper. Interviews with two local women who worked at the hotel in the 1930s confirm that business was booming. The Register of Deed records a lease from the Midland Hotel Company to H. M. Radrin in 1932. Mrs. Velma (Kleinschmidt) Kvasnicka, a Wilson resident began working at the hotel at the age of 15 in 1929. She worked for Mr. and Mrs. Mac Radrin who managed the hotel at the time and lived on the first floor. Mrs. 'Mac', as she was called, managed the staff. Mrs. Kvasnicka shared her memories of working at the hotel:

Other hotel employees at the time included: Elsie Lillie and Helen Kepka - two young single women who shared a small room on the third floor of the addition. Other employees included sisters Hazel and Maude Robas, Celia Waska, Levena Purma, Maria Rabas and Levi Pohle, the night clerk. Henry Hoch took care of the businessmen, using a baggage cart to haul their trunks from the train. Mrs. Wolf was the cook. The girls shared duties from washing dishes to waitressing, and helping with the housekeeping and laundry. She recalls a wash house out back and a mangle in the hallway off the kitchen to press the sheets. The restaurant served a full menu and she remembers a lot of birthday and wedding parties. The primary customers were salesmen and businessmen from the train and surrounding area. She remembers the hotel as a busy place running at maximum occupancy; on several occasions during snow storms that stranded travelers or when travelers came in late, they would put cots in the lounge when the rooms were all full. Mrs. Kvasnicka worked at the hotel for ten years; she worked seven days a week and earned \$1.00/day - "she absolutely loved it."¹⁸

Another local resident, Lavange Skalicky worked at the hotel during high school in "the dirty thirties." She shared her memories of working at the hotel:

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Her duties included peeling potatoes and helping in the kitchen; stripping beds and carrying the laundry out to the wash house in the back; and cleaning rooms. The employees were allowed to leave in the afternoon when the laundry and cleaning was done; they came back at five o'clock to work in the dining room. Mrs. Wolf was the cook and there was a large wood stove in the kitchen. The hotel raised their own chickens in a chicken house out back, next to the wash house. Henry Hoch worked at the hotel; she recalls him taking care of the chickens and cleaning the brass spittoons out front. Mrs. Skalicky remembers local businessmen and wealthy local residents coming to the hotel to eat but says that the railroad workers and travelers were the primary customers for the hotel. The basement was still used as the Sample Room during this time. Mrs. Skalicky worked for \$5.00/week and remembers saving a grand total of \$13.00 in tips one summer.¹⁹

John C. Burton of Syracuse, Kansas recalls visiting his Uncle Mac (H.M. Radrin) at the hotel in the 1930s. He shared his recollection of the hotel as an 8-12 year old boy:

Mr. Burton recalls that Uncle Mac, who always had a cigar in his mouth, ran the desk and register. Aunt Bell (Mrs. Mac to the staff), ran the kitchen "with a firm hand." As a young boy, Mr. Burton was required to wear a suit in the dining room. He remembers that at night, Uncle Mac would give him a roll of nickels and dimes to play the slot machines, located just off of the lobby. He had to give most of his winnings back to Uncle Mac.²⁰

It was in the 1930s that The Golden Belt Highway was constructed which followed section lines from Kansas City to Denver. It was a dirt-sanded road that connected towns through the center of Kansas.²¹ In 1934 the pavement of U.S. Highway 40 reached Wilson from the east - "pavement all the way to New York" was the local boast.²² The hotel was a center point for truck drivers who were transporting goods instead of the railroad. It also became important for tourists traveling through Kansas.

Deed records indicate a number of hotel owners from 1943-1967 including A.F. Cross, M.V. Stephens and J.C. Weaver. A 1943 ledger was found where Room #22 cost \$1.25 per night.²³ A hotel ledger from 1949-50 records the highest monthly income of \$4654.78 in July of 1950 and separate income from cigar concessions, the highest at \$395 in June of 1949. A 1950 ledger notes that the hotel was owned by J.C. and Audrey Weaver and records the number of patrons served in the restaurant running between 300-540 people per day in July and August. An undated menu (presumed to be from the 1950s) shows a variety of meals available at an average cost of \$1.25.

In the 1960s, the hotel was purchased by John and Agnes Hill who operated the hotel and restaurant until around 1980. It was during this period that the hotel experienced another 'boom'. Agnes Hill was born and raised in Wilson. John Hill was an oil field worker and later a driver for Bankers Dispatch.²⁴ In the 1960's the town enjoyed temporary financial boosts from federal projects in the area. An atlas Intercontinental missile base (soon abandoned) two miles east of town, the construction of the Wilson Dam eleven miles north on the Saline, and the thrust of Interstate 70 Highway through the state of Kansas.²⁵ In 1972 that the Union Pacific Railroad discontinued passenger service. The hotel's "claim to fame" was the filming of the 1970s movie Paper Moon starring Ryan and Tatum O'Neal. A number of scenes were filmed in and around the hotel.²⁶

Under the Hill's ownership, the hotel became known for its fine Czech dinners. In 1960, a room without a bath, cost \$1.75 and \$2.50 with a bath. It was during the Hill's tenure that a number of "improvements" were made. Wood paneling was installed on some walls, ceilings were lowered and carpeting installed.

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After a fire in a Holton, Kansas hotel in December of 1976, the state fire marshal Floyd Dibbern inspected a number of Kansas hotels.²⁷ "The Midland was one of eleven of the state's old hotels that were told they had to meet life safety codes or close. As least one of the eleven, the Warren, in Garden City, did close. A second Garden City hotel, the Windsor was inspected last fall (1976) and soon closed its doors."²⁸ Agnes Hill, who had operated the hotel alone since her husband's death in 1973 was determined not to close the hotel. Improvements were made to comply with current codes however due to health concerns Mrs. Hill was forced to retire and sell the hotel in the late 1970s.²⁹

Around 1980 the hotel was purchased by Phil and Martha Cloyd and then by Daniel and Cheryl Phillippi. Mr. Phillippi's mother, Ruthelma ran the hotel for a short time. Later a man named Kansas Walker operated the hotel. He advertised the famous "80 ounce" steak, free to anyone who can eat it in one setting.³⁰ The Walker's, the latest in a succession of owners, were in the process of purchasing the hotel when it closed in 1988. The hotel has set vacant since that time.

Summary

The Midland Hotel is significant architecturally as a distinctive example of a Late Victorian, vernacular limestone structure and as an important component of the community's commerce over the past century. As such, it is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion 'A' and 'C'. Today, the Midland Hotel is the only remaining hotel in a town that once boasted at least three hotels; the Cipra Hotel and the depot have both been demolished in the past twenty years. Across from the railroad tracks, the Midland as a strong reminder of the railroad and the community's recognition of the importance a hotel plays in the success of a community. The current plans for rehabilitation of The Midland Hotel demonstrates the community's commitment to retain the building as a significant part of Wilson's history.

¹ *Wilson Echo*, August 10, 1899.

² *Wichita Eagle*, September 5, 1969.

³ Eric Swegel, *An Architectural Interpretation of the Midland Hotel* (1998), p.2.

⁴ Jim Kemp, *American Vernacular Regional Influences in Architecture and Interior Design*. (Washington, D.C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1987), p.10.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ Grace Mullenburg and Ada Swineford, *Land of the Post Rock, Its Origins, History and People*, (Lawrence/Manhattan/Wichita: The University Press of Kansas, 1975), p.3, 58-71.

⁷ Sibrava, p.9.

⁸ Jane Gallart, *History of the Midland Hotel of Wilson, Kansas* (excerpt from unpublished thesis dissertation entitled *Wilson Kansas Heritage Presentation 1860s-1990s*), p.2.

⁹ *Wilson Echo*, August 10, 1899.

¹⁰ *Commercial and Hotel Register*, (Topeka, Kansas, March 1900, Vol. II, No. 3).

¹¹ *Wilson Echo*, November 13, 1902.

¹² Sibrava, p.9.

¹³ Opera House Museum (Wilson), *Local Histories on The Midland Hotel* (no author or date).

¹⁴ Mullenburg, p.139.

¹⁵ Letter to the Wilson Foundation from Laverne of Cladwell, Idaho, 14 January, 1998.

¹⁶ *Wilson World*, April 17, 1919.

¹⁷ Opera House Museum, local histories

¹⁸ Personal interview with Mrs. Velma Kvasnicka in Wilson, March 4, 2002.

¹⁹ Personal interview with Mrs. Lavange Skalicky in Wilson, March 4, 2002.

²⁰ Letter to the Wilson Foundation from John C. Burton of Syracuse, Kansas, January 7, 1998.

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²¹ Opera House Museum, local histories.

²² Sibrava, p.9.

²³ Opera House Museum, local histories.

²⁴ *Hutchinson News*, May 22, 1977.

²⁵ Sibrava, p.11.

²⁶ Opera House Museum, local histories.

²⁷ *Ellsworth Reporter*, December 10, 1976.

²⁸ *Hutchinson News*, May 22, 1977.

²⁹ *Kansas City Star*, September 26, 1978.

³⁰ *Salina Journal*, May 10, 1985.

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10. Geographic Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The legal description of the site is:
Lots 21, 22, 23, and 24 of Block 6 in the original Wilson townsite
Ellsworth County, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries reflect the original site on which J. D. Power built the Hotel Power (later renamed The Midland Hotel) in 1899.

Additional Documentation

Photographs

All photographs were taken February 12, 2002 by Brenda R. Spencer. Note that building is under rehabilitation. See Figures for historic and 'before' views.

#	Description of Views, [] indicated camera direction
1	Front (south) and west facades [northeast]
2	Front (south) and east facades [southwest]
3	East (side) facade [west]
4	North (rear) facade [south]
5	Detail of mansard roof [north]
6	Detail of storefront, south facade [north]
7	Detail of tripartite window, south elevation [north]
8	Basement area well, east facade [west]
9	Interior view of lobby [southwest]
10	Interior view of parlor [southeast]
11	Interior view of main staircase in lobby [northwest]
12	Detail of main stair in lobby [northeast]
13	Detail of main stair in lobby [west]
14	Window at landing on main stair [north]
15	Paneled wood pocket doors in lobby [east]
16	Detail of plaster wall and pine floor on second floor, main building [northwest]

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Additional Documentation
Appendix

An Overview of the History and Early Development of the Town of Wilson

"As early as 1865, a stage station on the new Butterfield Overland Dispatch running from Atchison, Kansas to Denver, Colorado was named Wilson Creek Station. The stage was abandoned in 1868, the year the Kansas Pacific Railway tracks reached the area and the first depot was built.¹ The original survey which followed the Republican River route was changed to the Smoky Hill route and on to Denver.² "The settlement continued to be known as Wilson Station until June of 1871 when the Post Office Department designated the site Attica. That label lasted only six months - until November of the same year when the designation was changed to Bosland, from the Latin word bos meaning cattle or oxen."³

In 1871, J.T. McKittrick, a world traveler and Civil War veteran, became the first permanent area settler. Later the same year, the town of Wilson was located and surveyed by the National Land Company.⁴ McKittrick later moved to town and built the Cipra Hotel south of the tracks.⁵ "The first building erected in town after the site was surveyed was built by Phillip Gabel, on the west side of Michigan Avenue near the railroad track, in which he opened the pioneer store of Wilson. A number of settlers arrived in 1871-72, primarily from Pennsylvania. But little of a settlement had been made when steps were taken to erect the first school house in 1872. Blown down in a wind storm, work was not resumed in 1874 when a small stone school house was built in the southeast part of town.⁶ In June of 1873, the Postal Department designated the town Wilson.⁷

Francis Swehla arrived in 1874, one of the first Bohemians in the area. That year began a second wave of settlers, this time Bohemian immigrants from Iowa, Nebraska, Chicago and New York. Swehla wrote letters in the Czech language newspapers encouraging other Bohemians to come to the area. "A curious fact about the Bohemians is that although most had been craftsmen in the old country, the majority, in the beginning, made farming - which they knew little about- their vocation here. Cheap, available land was the reason. However, many soon drifted back to their trades. Probably the Bohemians greatest contribution to the culture and social life of Wilson was the erection of the Wilson Opera House in 1901."⁸

"Like the first buildings in all new frontier towns, those in Wilson were rather inferior, and most only one-story high. The 'Wilson House' was one of the first two-story stone buildings, erected south of the tracks opposite the depot, by A. Jellison in 1877."⁹

As many buildings went up in Wilson in 1878 as had been erected in all the years that preceded it. In the fall of 1878, the Kansas Pacific Railway Company commenced erection of a magnificent stone depot, which opened in the spring of 1879.¹⁰ The depot was constructed of sandstone quarried between Kanopolis and Brookville and shipped in by train. It was hailed as one of the finest depots on the entire line of road between Kansas City and Denver.¹¹

In regard to improvement, 1879 was nearly a repetition of the construction in 1878. *The Wilson Echo*, the only paper published in Wilson at this time, was established by S.A. Coover in 1879. By 1880, Wilson was commencing to look like a town with a first class depot, a school house, two or three hotels, a mill, a bank, a printing office and several businesses. The first church was built the following year.¹² The community grew modestly but steadily. In 1882 Wilson boasted a population of 503, and the following year the town petitioned and was granted incorporation. In 1886 the Wilson State Bank was founded and still serves the community.¹³

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At the time of its construction in 1899, the Hotel Power (now the Midland Hotel), Wilson had two or three other hotels and the Union Pacific depot stood as a testament to the railroad's role in the community.

The "Wilson House," a two-story stone building which stood unfinished south of the track and opposite the depot, was completed by John Jellison in 1875. Arthur A. Jellison recalls that his uncle, John Jellison traded the building for a farm in Iowa. Issac Wilson of Allerton was to take over the hotel and open it for business. When all of the Wilsons arrived, 12 or 13 covered wagons of families, they moved into the hotel. Issac's son, Millard Wilson recalled frequent visits of the railroad men who ate, drank, and sometimes stayed overnight at the hotel. The engineers and brakemen came to know the hotel as the "Wilson House" by the owner's name. Later the hotel was managed by Pop Claussen.¹⁴ The precise fate of the Wilson House is unknown but the building was gone and replaced by the Weber/Pierano Building which was constructed in 1904 and still standing today at the southeast corner of Highway 40 and Main Street.

Constructed around 1880, the Cipra Hotel was originally built by J.T. McKittrick, a land agent for the Union Pacific Railroad. The building was located on the southwest corner of Highway 40 and Main Street. "In the early 1890's, McKittrick advertised the building in *The Wilson World* and claimed the "building would be suitable for a hotel and is one of the finest store rooms in the city." According to a great niece of McKittrick, the building was not originally built as a hotel, but as an office building. M.H. Alderson, one of the first doctors in Wilson, and Bill Slimm, a jeweler, were two of the first businesses to rent office space in the McKittrick building. Lewis and Josephine Cipra bought the building in the early 1900s. It was known as both the Cipra Hotel and the Central Hotel. Jack Libal, a Wilson resident, purchased the hotel in 1962 and changed the name to J and L recreation. After Libal sold the hotel in 1974 it changed owners several times and was used primarily as a tavern." One of the oldest remaining buildings in Wilson, the hotel was demolished in 1982.¹⁵

Although no collaborating documentation can be found, local histories of the Midland Hotel also mention The Bohemian Hotel. This hotel was said to have been located a short distance from the railroad tracks on the west side of main street (north of the railroad tracks, possibly near where the grocery store is now. It was reportedly used for farmers who traveled to town for business and supplies and a rest before the day's journey back to the farm and temporary workers who helped in town or railroad.¹⁶

¹ Frank Sibrava, *History of Wilson*, p.3-5..

² *Wilson World*, July 8, 1948.

³ Sibrava, p.5.

⁴ Andreas, *History of Kansas*, Vol. II, p. 1280.

⁵ Sibrava, p.5.

⁶ William C. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*. Ellsworth County, Part 7. Wilson (on-line).

⁷ Sibrava, p.6.

⁸ Sibrava, p.6-7.

⁹ Andreas, p. 1281.

¹⁰ Cutler.

¹¹ Sibrava, p.8.

¹² Cutler.

¹³ Sibrava, p.8.

¹⁴ *Wilson World*, July 15, 1948.

¹⁵ *Wilson World*, May 6, 1982.

¹⁶ Opera House Museum (Wilson), *Local Histories on The Midland Hotel* (no author or date).